Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Wilson, Larry David. 1988. *Tantilla brevicauda.*

Tantilla brevicauda Mertens

Tantilla brevicauda Mertens, 1952b: 137. Type-locality, "El Grito, Finca Los Angeles, 1510m. H. Cumbre de Jayaque, Dept. La Libertad, El Salvador." Holotype, Museum und Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg 43243, a female collected 12 November 1951 by A. Zilch (not examined by author).

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition and Diagnosis**. "A species of *Tantilla* with a tan through brown to grayish brown dorsum with a poorly-defined pale brown middorsal stripe and a tan lateral stripe occupying the upper half of row 3, all of 4, and sometimes the lower portion of row 5. The head pattern consists of a pale nuchal band on a brown background, which does not cross the last supralabial. The posterior ventral and subcaudal surfaces are reddish orange. Ventrals and subcaudals range from 139 to 155, and 21 to 26, respectively" (Wilson, 1982). *Tantilla brevicauda* may be distinguished from all congeners by having a poorly-defined pale middorsal and lateral stripe on a tan to brown or grayish brown ground color, 139 to 155 ventrals, and 21 to 26 subcaudals.

• **Descriptions.** Available material was described by Mertens (1952a and b), Uzzell and Starrett (1958), and Wilson (1970, 1982).

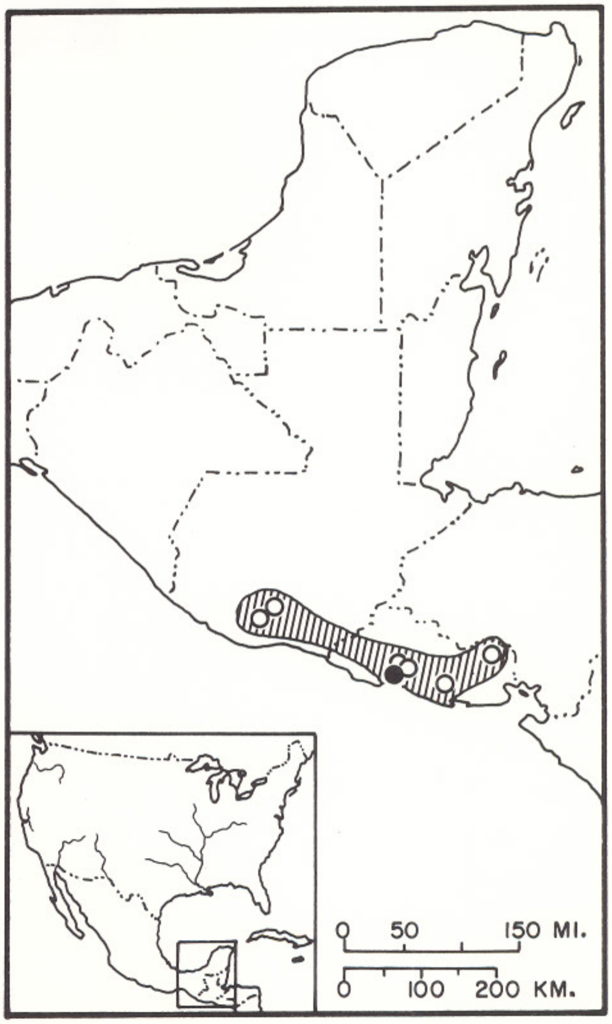
• **Illustrations.** Mertens (1952a) provided a black-and-white photograph of the whole body. Wilson (1982) published black-and-white photographs of lateral and dorsal views of the head and anterior body, as well as a pen-and-ink drawing of the dorsal pattern.

• **Distribution.** *Tantilla brevicauda* occurs at "moderate and intermediate elevations in southcentral and northeastern El Salvador and south-central Guatemala" (Wilson, 1982).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature**. This species was described on the basis of material from El Salvador (Mertens, 1952a and b), with additional material reported from there by Uzzell and Starrett (1958). Wilson (1970) reported the species from Guatemala and (1982) summarized data on taxonomy, distribution, and relationships. Van Devender and Cole (1977) also discussed relationships.

• **Etymology**. The name *brevicauda* is derived from the Latin *brevis*, meaning "short," and *cauda*, meaning "tail", in reference to the relatively small number of subcaudals characteristic of this species.



Map. Solid circle indicates the type-locality. Open circles mark other localities.

Literature Cited

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Uzzell, Thomas M., Jr., and Priscilla H. Starrett. 1958. Snakes from El Salvador. Copeia 1958(4): 339-342.

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